

REMARKS

The election/restriction requirement dated December 21, 2006 holds that this application contains claims directed to four patentably distinct species. More specifically, Applicant is required to elect one of the following patentably distinct species for prosecution on the merits under 35 U.S.C. §121:

Species I - Figures 1-16;
Species II - Figures 17-18;
Species III - Figures 19-21; and
Species IV - Figures 22-24;

In response, Applicant hereby elects the *Species I* illustrated in Figures 1-16 *without traverse*. Applicant believes that claims 1-31 read on Species I illustrated in Figures 1-16.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests examination of claims 1-31 since they read on the elected species shown in Figures 1-16. Claims 32-36 are believed to be directed to a non-elected embodiment. Thus, these claims 32-36 can be withdrawn from consideration in this case. Claims 32-36 have been cancelled by the current Amendment.

Claim Status Identifiers

Applicant noticed that status identifier of claim 27 in the February 6, 2006 Preliminary Amendment was inaccurate. In particular, claim 27 was indicated as "Original" while it should have been indicated as "Currently Amended". Claim 27 in the current listing of claims is correctly identified as "Previously Presented". Applicant apologizes for the error in the February 6, 2006 Preliminary Amendment, and for any inconvenience caused by this error.

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Appl. No. 10/826,272
Amendment dated January 10, 2007
Reply to Office Action of December 21, 2006

Prompt examination on the merits is respectfully requested. Of course, if there are any questions regarding this Amendment/Response, please feel free to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Patrick A. Hilsmier", written over a horizontal line.

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